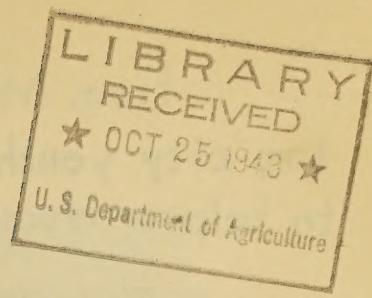


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Reserve

# V.F.V. ON THE FARM FRONT



VICTORY FARM VOLUNTEERS  
OF THE U. S. CROP CORPS

Extension Service  
War Food Administration

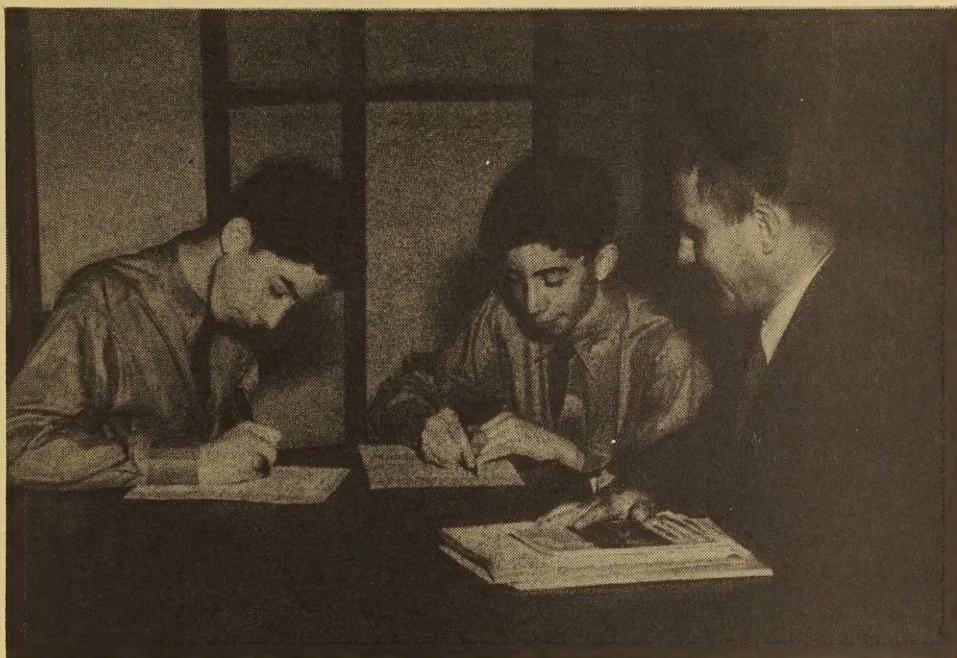
**From Maine to Texas, from Florida to Washington, city youth responded to the Nation's call in 1943 to help produce the most food in our country's history.**



## **Organization**

Mobilized as Victory Farm Volunteers, these youth formed a part of the U. S. Crop Corps. This program operated under authority of Public Law 45 of the Seventy Eighth Congress, administered through the Federal Extension Service of the War Food Administration. Under the leadership of the State Extension Services in 48 States and the Hawaiian Islands, the program early had the active support and cooperation of schools, youth-serving agencies, civic organizations, farm leaders, and others. The Extension Service placed 350,000 of these young people, and probably an equal number found farm jobs themselves.

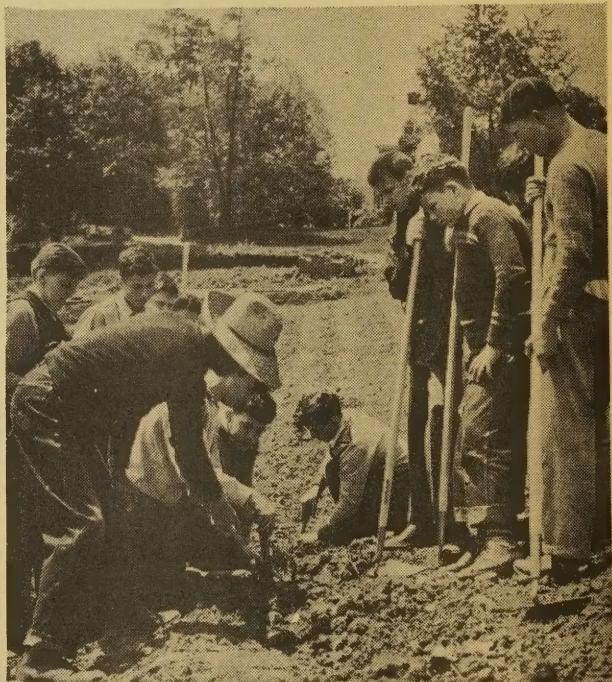
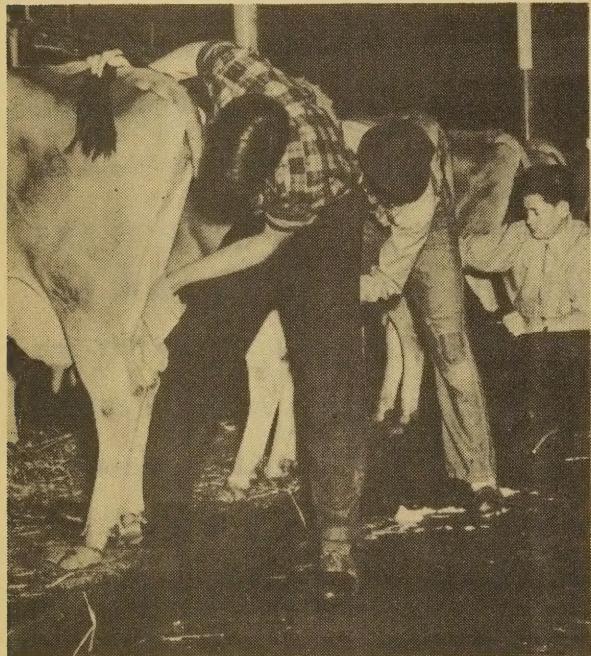
# Mobilization



With 43 assistant State farm labor supervisors for VFW, and 5,000 county farm labor assistants, under the guidance of county extension agents, plans and procedure based on need, were worked out with State, county, and often with local labor committees. Since youth was considered as only one of several sources of labor supply, the VFW program was coordinated through the county extension office. However, community recruitment and placement offices were often maintained, as in Minnesota, where over 500 placement centers were in operation. Frequently the schools designated a recruitment representative.

## Selection and Training

VFW leadership realized that youth with enthusiasm could be an effective source of labor supply, but needed to be carefully selected, trained, and supervised. Farmers found that they received more effective help when they had learned to supervise the young workers sympathetically. Training programs varied from State to State. Usually, however, they included the learn-by-doing technique on selected farms, at colleges of agriculture, vocational and other schools, as well as training by the farmer on the job.

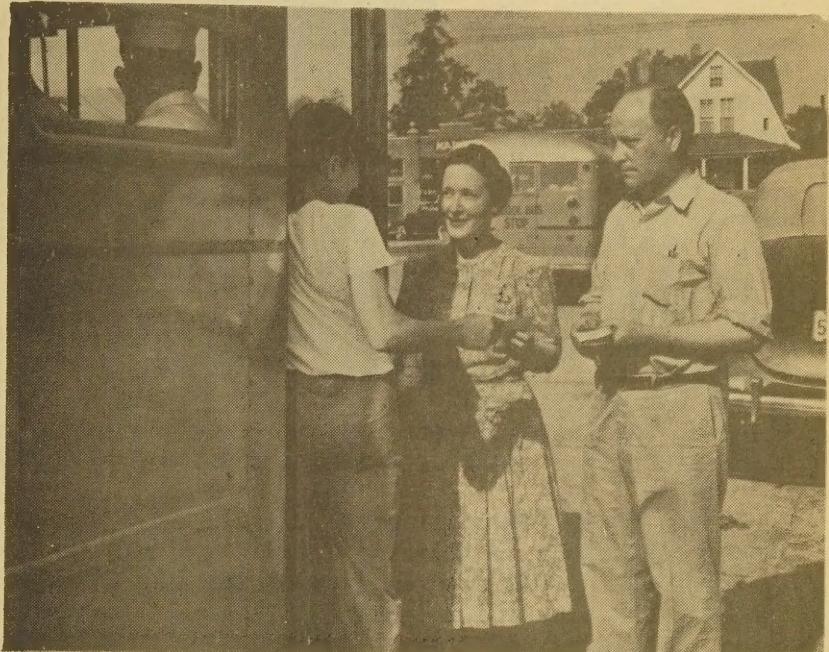


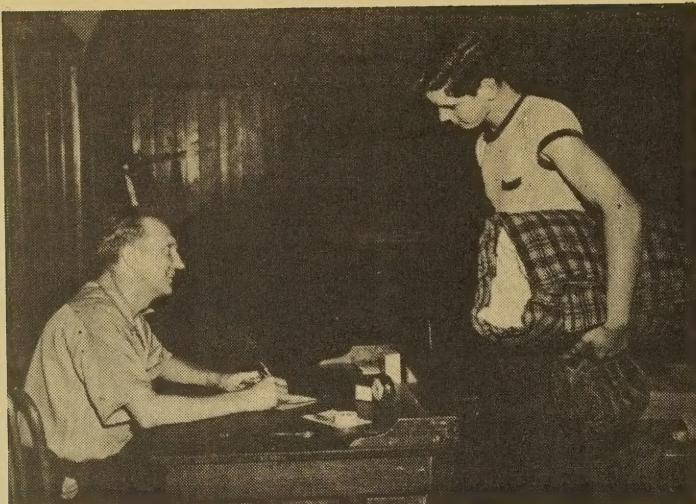
# Placement and Supervision

County extension agents and their assistants arranged for the placement and supervision of the young workers. Most of them lived at home and were transported to farms daily in school buses, trucks, or cars.

## day hauls

Teachers, ministers, youth leaders or other adults, acting as supervisors, often accompanied these young workers while in transit and in the fields. In Oregon, over 4,000 boys and girls were employed on this day-haul basis.

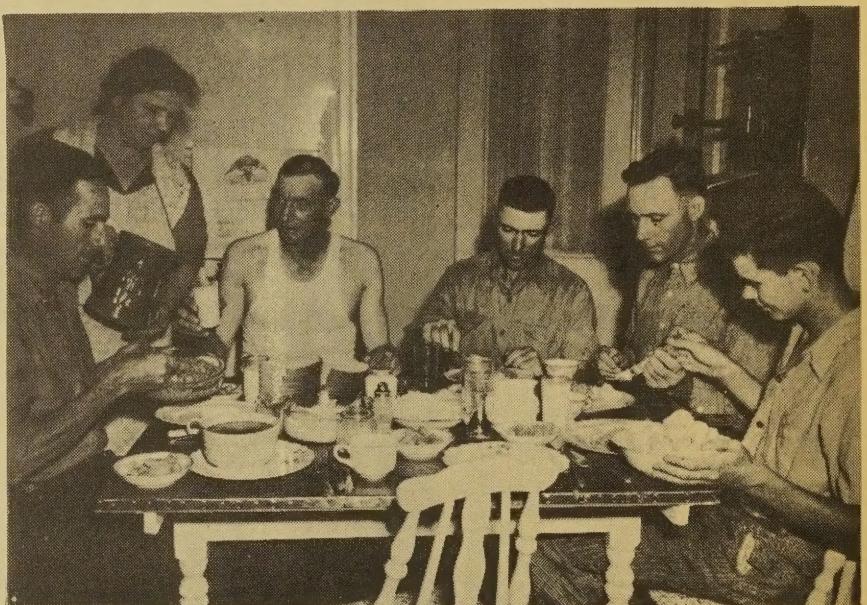




## camps and

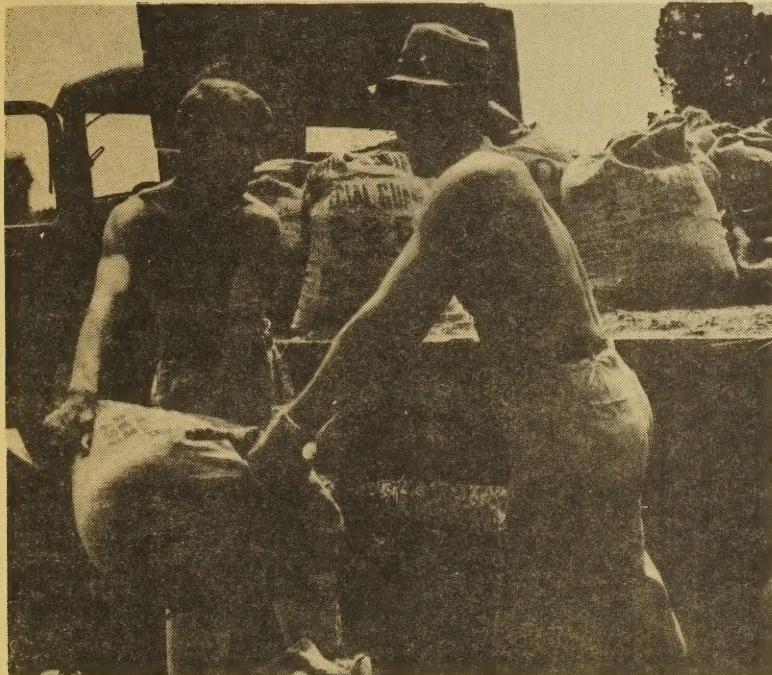
Youth farm labor camps were organized either directly by the Extension Service or in co-operation with youth-serving agencies. Boys and girls enrolled for varying lengths of time. They were housed in school buildings, recreation camps, or other existing facilities. Camp supervision was usually pro-

vided by the Extension Service; and supervision in the fields, by the farmer. Connecticut, for example, had 16 such camps with over 1,100 youth.



More than 50,000 boys and girls lived on the farms where they were employed. County farm labor assistants visited them from time to time to make any necessary adjustments. Often the young people became as much a part of the family as the farmer's own sons and daughters. They took part in community activities such as Grange meetings, 4-H Clubs, square dances, and church picnics. New York, Boston, and Philadelphia furnished 500 recruits who worked all summer on farms in Vermont. As in other parts of the country, some liked the farm so well that they are staying all winter and going to the local school.

Plenty of food fresh from the farm gardens, plenty of sleep, undisturbed by the screech of brakes and the rumble of trains, plenty of work in the open fields. Parents testified to healthier, heartier young people returning to school in the fall. Patriotism was found to be one of the principal reasons for volunteering for farm work. Personal motives were secondary to the job of feeding older brothers in the Army.



At first farmers were skeptical of the actual value of youthful workers, but VFV's soon proved their worth in all kinds of farm work. Though not expected to do the same amount of work experienced hands could do, many youth often equalled the results accomplished by labor from the usual sources. They received prevailing wages. A farmer in Delaware reported that a group of boys cut as much asparagus as older workers and did the job as well or better.



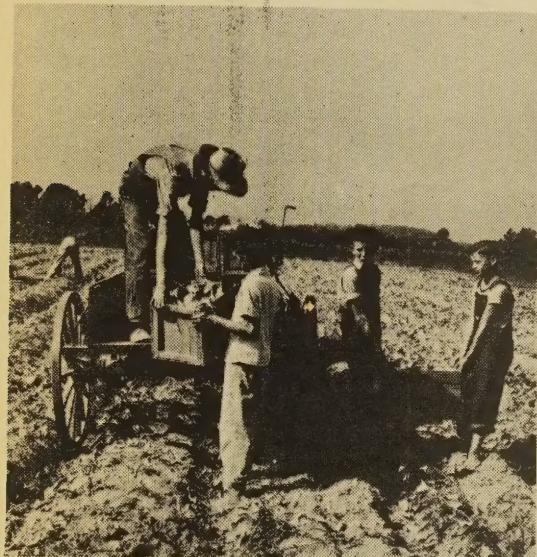
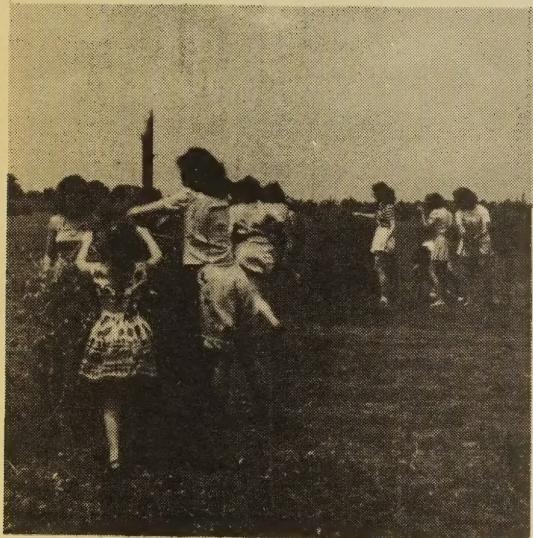
VFW's earned the wholehearted approval of their employers. Many farmers have already made arrangements to hire the same workers again next year.

Youth  
performed all  
types of farm  
work

They planted, cultivated, harvested, graded, and packed tomatoes. In De Soto Parish, La., 750 boys and girls harvested 600 acres of tomatoes.

In many Southern States, young workers picked peanuts, cotton, and sweetpotatoes. In New Mexico, schools opened August 1 in some sections, to allow for a month's cotton-picking holiday in the fall.

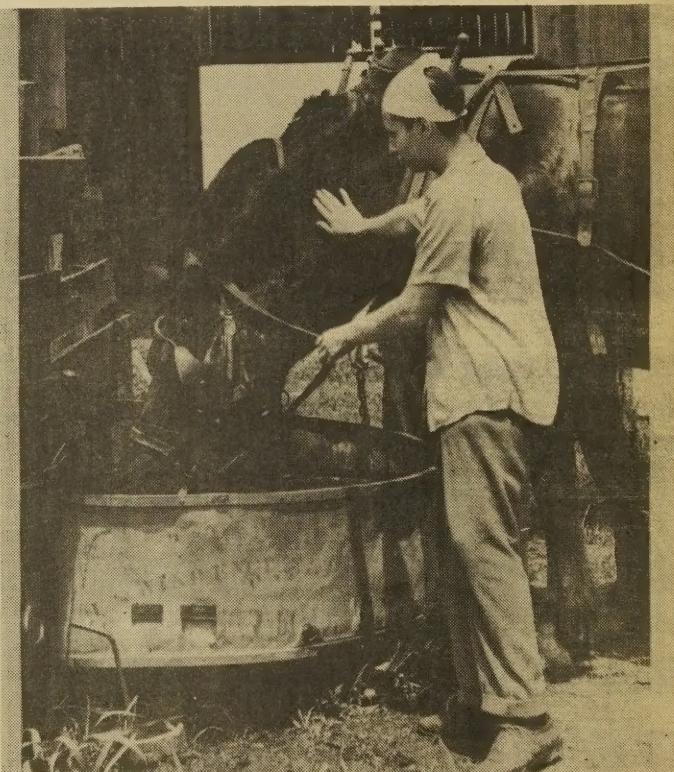
In one county alone, 5,000 youth picked cotton. North Carolina excused several hundred VFW's from school for this purpose.





They picked apples, prunes, cherries and pears. Youth picked 240,000 bushels of peaches in Utah.

Since machinery is hard to replace, only the more capable youth were taught to drive tractors. Young people living on farms learned to milk and care for dairy cattle, drive teams, and do general chores around the place.





Vegetables and small fruits kept many VFW's busy. In Maryland, youth harvested 80% of the bean crop; 30,000 tons of onions, weeded by boys and girls, were harvested in Muskegon County, Mich.; beef cattle, - future steaks for the Army - were fed and cared for on farms in the West.

Strawberries were picked in Tennessee by 1,600 boys and girls, who were excused from school in the spring to do this job. Youth from Portland, Oreg., picked \$60,000 worth of strawberries.





Millions of bushels of potatoes were harvested by VFW's. More than 1,600 boys and girls were excused from school for a month to pick potatoes in Aroostook County, Maine. Among these workers were 611 Boy Scouts from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

In Indiana, a camp of 531 boys worked on a corn-detasseling job. This work made it possible to produce enough seed to plant 1,500,000 acres of hybrid corn next year.

Haying made up a large part of the work done by youth on dairy and live-stock farms. Farmers in New Hampshire employed over 400 volunteers to help harvest an estimated 325,000 acres of hay valued at \$5,000,000.



These young Volunteers have learned more about the country they live in. They are better citizens, better equipped to take their place in an adult world. At the same time they have had an important part in producing the vital foods needed to wage war. As they go back to school in the fall, they can take real pride in their record of service on the war food front.



In 1943, Victory Farm Volunteers -

harvested 620,000 bales of cotton from 821,600 acres valued at \$77,000,000 - one-third of the total crop (Mississippi).

detasseled 7,160 acres of corn valued at \$1,000,000 (Indiana);

shocked 110,000 acres of grain valued at \$2,000,000 (Nebraska).

picked 604,800 boxes of apples, valued at \$840,000 (New Hampshire).

harvested 16,000,000 bushels of potatoes (Minnesota).

picked 90,000 bushels of tomatoes valued at \$300,000 (Louisiana).

detasseled 3,000 acres of hybrid seed corn valued at \$750,000 (Nebraska).

helped pick 19,000,000 bushels of potatoes valued at \$25,000,000 (Pennsylvania).

harvested 150,000 tons of fresh grapes valued at \$60,000 (California).

picked 258,000 bushels of beans valued at \$600,000 (Louisiana).

supplied 60 percent of all emergency farm labor in the State (Iowa).

picked 3,400 tons of cherries valued at \$684,000 (Utah).

hoed 1,000 acres of beans valued at \$100,000 (Nebraska).

lived and worked on 14,000 farms (Minnesota).

picked over 1,000,000 pounds of cotton in one county (North Carolina).

detasseled 44,000 acres of hybrid seed corn valued at \$7,000,000 (Iowa).

helped save a berry crop valued at \$4,000,000 (Texas).

harvested 1,350,000 bushels of Irish potatoes valued at \$2,100,000 (Louisiana).

thinned, hoed, and harvested 18,000 acres of sugar beets valued at \$2,750,000 (Utah).

picked 1,740,000 barrels of potatoes (Maine).

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NOTE. - The foregoing data are based on preliminary 1943 reports. They are indicative of what was done in all States.

## A NEW YORK CITY GIRL ON A VERMONT FARM

My impressions of farm life after a month as a VFV recruit are a series of experiences new and strange and novel to me. I have found in myself new capabilities, emotions, and attitudes.

I have discovered myself crashing clumsily through what seemed like impenetrable jungle and mire, suddenly stopping and wanting, with every fiber in me, to hear the wonderful sound of a cowbell or the sweet music of a husky "moo".

I have found myself earnestly scraping manure from a calf pen, and, as earnestly, wishing that Nature had not seen fit to grant this particular daughter with a sense of smell.

I have felt unutterable satisfaction pervade this new me as I squeezed, pulled, and cajoled the last squirt of rich white milk from a reluctant mountain of a Guernsey cow.

I have seen my mirrored reflection, baggy and smelly in dirty overalls, muck-covered shoes, and hideous little peaked cap, streaked with dirt, strung with hay wisps and - have not been horrified.

I have found myself thinking of things like lipstick, dainty dresses, and subways as unimportant - even laughable - trifles of a far-away and completely insignificant world.

I have felt myself to be the world's most capable and wonderful human being as I perched behind a willing team, driving the tedder through hundreds of miles of hay. Where could there be another mortal who could accomplish this wonderful thing? Where another, sitting atop the world with hay tossing and dancing madly in the wake of the mechanism he is driving?

I haven't mentioned the vast appetite which has developed within me, nor the fine new feeling that I am almost a part of the busy, happy home where I live.

With this family I despair at grey clouds during the haying season, with them I rejoice at the promising appearance of the potato field.

I am learning to love this new life, and be surer than ever that I have chosen well in deciding to some day make it my own.

(A letter from Ruth Rappaport printed in the Vermont Farm Bureau News, August 1943)

